(a) whether the Coal India Limited had purchased about 30,000 gas masks technically called 'Filter Self Rescuers' at a cost of Rs. 5 crores which were later found to be faulty;

(b) if so, whether such gas masks were purchased after proper test;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COAL (SHRI KARIYA MUNDA): (a) and (b) Thirty thousand (30,000) filter self rescuers approved by DGMS were procured in 1996-97 and put into use. However, in 1998, as per advice of DGMS, these were withdrawn from use and after sample testing at CMRI, Dhanbad, all these thirty thousand self rescuers have again been put into use in 1999 on the basis of satisfactory test results.

(c) Not applicable in view of reply given to parts (a) and (b) above.

(d) Does not arise in view of reply given to above.

Ash content in coal

†4178. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that approximately 34 per cent ash is found in the coal produced in the country;

(b) if not, the estimated maximum quantity and minimum quantity of ash in the same;

(c) whether there is any plan to reduce the quantity of ash in the coal and bring it to the level of quantity of ash found in the imported coal; and

(d) if so, the quantity of ash found in the imported coal?

THE MINISTER OF COAL (SHRI KARIYA MUNDA): (a) No, Sir, ash in coal of different seams differ widely.

(b) Coal produced in the country from different coal seams are categorised in different coal-grades. Coking coals are graded on the basis of ash content, the non-coking coals are graded on the basis of Useful Heat Value (UHV) and the semi/weakly coking coals are graded on the basis of ash plus moisture content.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

The estimated maximum and minimum ash percent in the indigenous coals in different grades are as under:

1. Coking Coal

Grade	Ash%	
	Minimum	Maximum
STL-I	-	15
STL-II	>15	18
Washery-I	>18	21
Washery-II	>21	24
Washery-III	>24	28
Washery-IV	>28	35

2. Non-coking Coal :

	UHV Range (K. Cal/Kg)		Ash % (at 5% moisture) content)	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
A	>6200	-	-	14.6
B	>5600	6200	14.6	18.9
C	>4940	5600	18.9	23.7
D	>4200	4940	23.7	29.1
E	>3360	4200	29.1	35.1
F	>2400	3360	35.1	41.1
G	>1300	2400	42.1	50.1

3. Semi/weakly coking coal

Grade	Ash% (at 2% moisture content)	
	Minimum	Maximum
Semi-coking-I	-	17
Semi-coking-II	17	22

(c) To reduce the ash content in coal the following measures are taken by Coal India Limited:—

(i) Adherence to the envisaged mining sequence laid out in the mining method itself.

(ii) Picking of oversize stone/boulders, extraneous materials etc.

(iii) Size reduction in coal handling plants/crushing machines thereby segregating different size fractions and eliminating the impurities of higher density.

(iv) Adopting proper blasting procedure/technique for reducing the possibility of ad-mixture of coal with over burden materials. Keeping overburden benches sufficiently advanced from coal benches in opencast mines to avoid falling of over burden on coal bench/face.

(v) Washing/upgradation of coal in coal beneficiation plants thereby reducing the ash content in beneficiated coal.

Different types of imported coal have different ranges of ash content which is much less compared to indigenous coal. As ash in Indian coal is intimately mixed with coaly substance, it has difficult washing characteristics. Washing Indian coal to the ash level of imported coal will drastically reduce the yield and is techno-economically not viable.

(d) Ash content of imported coal varies from as low as 1-2% to about 15%.

Loss-making coal mines

4179. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the number with location of chronically loss-making coal mines in the country:

(b) the cumulative losses incurred by these mines as on 31st March, 2002:

(c) how Government propose to tackle the problems of these coal mines: and

(d) how far the mafia activities are responsible for this state of affairs?

THE MINISTER OF COAL (SHRI KARIYA MUNDA): (a) Number of Chronically loss making mines of Coal India Ltd. and its subsidiaries as